

Commercial Attaches:

Dear Comrades:

No less a personage than Gottwald insisted that trade relations with the West on the basis of equality be maintained. That is exactly how he spoke in Parliament and later as President. I was assigned the duty of finding a market for goods in which the Soviet Union, or the other countries of peoples democracies, had no interest. For example, as you well know, Plzen beer, bijouterie, expensive ladies footwear, porcelain and glass were our main exports for which there was a good Western demand.

Today my task terminates because new winds are blowing in our homeland. They are making of it a Soviet arsenal; trustworthy and faithful communists are now being labelled as traitors and spies. Because of this I will not be able to sell and I am afraid I will soon be recalled to Prague. I am undecided whether or not to return. What is the fate of those that return, and those who remain abroad even though they are convinced communists? I have spent more than two years abroad and do not feel well enough informed on actual conditions at home. I do know that some of my former friends in the foreign ministry were transferred into production work. I do not know the details of their work but one can assume. The Prague trials gave some indications. Our friends who decided to remain in the uncongenial Western countries are not sleeping on a bed of roses. But they do have satisfactory jobs and above all freedom and protection and, what is more, hopes of returning to our homeland when the autocrats disappear.

I would be a hypocrite to state that I did not evaluate these thoughts on the basis of my true communist convictions. This is the basis for my disappointment. It is almost impossible to change coats frequently enough to keep in step with the Party. I am comparing the Party's creed following its victory over the reactionaries, the promises of all Party functionaries and Gottwald himself regarding the building up of socialism with a two year and later a five year plan. What do we see after five years? Hunger and poverty in our country. This cannot be denied even by a die-hard communists. Am I to continue sharing the responsibility of such a Party? I would rather forego any honor connected with the building of Gottwald's type of socialism with a pick in some mine. Instead, I am going to put off my trip to Prague until the air is cleared--if this ever happens.

Carefully watching you, I remain

Your friend,

State Dept. declassification instructions on file